

Remarks for the Listening Session on the new Farm Bill
Ana Legrand, Connecticut Integrated Pest Management Coordinator
Oct. 1, 2005

Good morning,

I represent the Connecticut Integrated Pest Management Program and I am currently its coordinator. The Integrated Pest Management or IPM program provides information and training on environmentally sound pest management tactics. Our goal is to help growers with their pest management needs in a way that protects the environment and also ensures the profitability of their operation.

Through our partnership with NRCS we have been providing IPM training to growers who qualified to the Environmental Quality Incentives Program or EQIP. This training is delivered through weekly visits to the participating growers. The IPM staff helps the grower in dealing with any current pest problems as well as provides training on how to carry out season-long IPM for a particular crop. Our presence at the EQIP growers sites not only benefits the participating growers, but we also take information gathered there and relay it to other growers around the state. For example, the fruit IPM educator, Lorraine Los, uses weather data collected at a grower's site to predict the occurrence of apple scab infection. Then through several communication means she alerts growers about the likelihood of apple scab infection and when treatments for this problem are justified. Two key aspects of IPM are: the emphasis on tactics that prevent pest problems and the ability to predict when pesticide applications are justified. With this information we are able to cut down on unnecessary use of pesticides.

We are currently training 14 growers who have qualified to the EQIP program. These growers will receive IPM training for 3 years covering a variety of crops including vegetables, field corn, small fruit and tree fruit crops. We are also expanding our services to organic growers that qualify to participate in the EQIP program. The partnership with NRCS and the funding received through EQIP has supported our IPM program and most importantly has provided an incentive for growers to try out new IPM strategies. We are thankful for this support as we hope that the next Farm Bill will continue to sponsor programs like EQIP which benefit Connecticut's growers and our environment.

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